



# **THE BRAILLE MONITOR**

**Voice of the  
National Federation of the Blind**

**MARCH - 1972**

The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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If you or a friend wish to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_ (or, "\_\_\_\_ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: \_\_\_\_") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons and to be held and administered by direction of its Executive Committee."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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## MISSISSIPPI JOINS THE FEDERATION

The National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi came into being on January 15, 1972, at the Downtowner Motor Inn in Jackson, Mississippi, the State Capital. The Federation's forty-sixth affiliate is representative of the blind of Mississippi and broadly based. It is an organization with which Federationists can be pleased and which will represent the hopes and aspirations of Mississippi in the years ahead.

Plans for organizing a Mississippi affiliate began last July when Mr. E. U. Parker, a prominent blind Mississippi businessman and civic leader, attended our Houston Convention. E. U. Parker found the enthusiasm and vitality of Federationists contagious, and planning began at Houston for the effort which came to fruition on January 15th. E. U. Parker operates the State Farm Insurance Agency in Laurel, Mississippi, which serves Jones County, and for a number of years he has been among the top ten State Farm agents in the State. In addition to his business activities, Mr. Parker is a leader in the Boy Scout movement (is the father of three daughters and says he is concerned about the quality of young men coming along). Finally, he has been active in Mississippi politics and has many contacts throughout the State.

Plans to organize our new Mississippi affiliate followed the pattern with which Federationists are already familiar. With a key leader in the state, members of the organizing team converged on Jackson, Mississippi, Friday evening, January 7th. Mary Hartle, Peggy Pinder, Marc Maurer and John Taylor left Des Moines together and converged with Nellie Hargrove in

Jackson. In a short period of time Lou Corbin of Florida, Marshall Tucker of South Carolina, Dick Jones of Idaho, Dick Edlund of Kansas and Loren Schmitt of Illinois joined the team. On Friday evening the entire team met with E. U. Parker, Albert Beasley and Hugh Barlow and plans for areas of the State to be covered were considered. On Saturday some members of the team began individual contacts in the Jackson area while others set out for universities and other communities. The campaign continued throughout the week with the last members of the team returning early Saturday morning just in time for the organizational meeting.

Prior to arrival of the team E. U. Parker had contacted Mr. James Carballo, Director of Mississippi Services for the Blind, to inquire about names and addresses of blind persons in the State. Mr. Carballo suggested that E. U. Parker look into the objectives of the Federation and advised further that he would provide names to the American Council of the Blind but not to the National Federation of the Blind. (This again lends emphasis to the relationship existing between the ACB and many of the agencies and underscores the term used by some, "company union.") Following further questioning Mr. Carballo indicated that lists of names might be confidential.

Harvey Webb, a former Mississippian, joined the organizing team on Monday afternoon and performed ably in his efforts to contact blind Mississippians. As team members traveled over the State and contacted blind persons, they found growing enthusiasm for an independent organization of the blind and deep concern over the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the State

Mississippi Industries for the Blind in Jackson employs approximately two hundred blind persons with wages and working conditions superior to most workshops for the blind in the country. In addition, Mississippi has a substantial and fairly successful vending stand program. Beyond these two areas of employment, however, opportunities for the blind are extremely limited. For example, no blind teachers in public schools could be located and no computer programmers could be found. Employment in private industry is rare. Blind Mississippians desire to participate in expanding employment opportunities for blind persons in all sectors of the economy. Further, public assistance for the needy blind is inadequate, to say the least.

Blind Mississippians gathered at the Downtowner Motor Inn on Saturday, January 15, for the organizational meeting and some seventy persons were present during the morning and afternoon sessions. Don and Betty Capps arrived from South Carolina on Friday evening and Don conducted the Saturday meetings with his usual poise, wit, and sincerity. The meeting was called to order shortly after 10 a.m. and the morning session was given over to an explanation of Federation structure, goals, and accomplishments, followed by a taped message from President Jernigan and a question period.

After lunch the membership moved affirmatively with the unanimous adoption of its constitution and selection of its name, National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi. The group then proceeded to elect the following officers: president, Albert Beasley, Jackson; first vice-president, E. U. Parker, Laurel; second vice-president, Kay Mulholland,

Collinsville; secretary, Kathryn Stroble, Meridian; treasurer, Hugh Barlow, Jackson; two-year board member, Gabe Fuqua, Jackson; two-year board member, Breland Collier, Jackson; one-year board member, Sallie Evers, Natchez; one-year board member, Maxine Meadows, Hazelhurst; NFB delegate, E. U. Parker; alternate delegate, Albert Beasley.

As the final item in the afternoon business session the National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi voted unanimously to support introduction and passage of the Model White Cane Law by the Mississippi Legislature which is now in session. This effort was given added impetus when the group learned that two members of the organizing team had, on the grounds of blindness, been denied admission to the Old Miss Hotel in Oxford, Mississippi, while there visiting University of Mississippi students. The proprietor explained that blind persons couldn't stay at his hotel because he had steps which they couldn't climb and there was no restaurant at the hotel at which they could eat.

The officers and directors of the NFB of Mississippi are broadly representative in terms of geographical distribution, educational background, age and work experience. Albert Beasley, the president, has been employed for 22 years at Mississippi Industries for the Blind and in 1970 was named the outstanding blind person of the year by National Industries for the Blind. The home of Albert and Louise Beasley has been a gathering place for blind persons visiting Jackson for many years. In addition to his work at Mississippi Industries for the Blind, Albert Beasley supplements his income as a musician. Further, he is a ham radio

operator, call letters W5DRT.

The first vice-president, E. U. Parker, needs no introduction to many Federationists who had the opportunity to meet him in Houston. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and a successful businessman with major concern to assist in expanding employment opportunities for the blind of Mississippi. The second vice-president, Kay Mulholland, is the youngest member of the board and a freshman at Belhaven College. She is a very charming young lady majoring in music. The secretary, Kathryn Stroble, is a 1971 home economics graduate of Peabody College and a certified teacher of home economics. Rounding out the officers, Hugh Barlow, treasurer, has been a successful vending stand manager for approximately 23 years and has, for a long time, been interested in a Mississippi organization of the blind. Gabe Fuqua is a graduate of Jackson Law School and a member of the Mississippi Bar who has also served a number of years as a local justice of the peace. Breland Collier holds bachelor's and master's degrees, has worked as a guidance counselor in a school for the blind, and is now employed by the Internal Revenue Office. Sallie Evers is a 1971 graduate of Mississippi College with a bachelor's degree in church music, while Maxine Meadows is a vending stand manager and the mother of three small children. Five of the nine officers and board members are college graduates while the sixth is currently a college student. Four are women, five are men and four are under 25 years of age. If any of the charming young ladies on this board make it to Chicago next summer, they will attract considerable attention.

With formation of the National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi, an important new State joined the organized blind movement and efforts are already under way to form local chapters in population centers of the State. The National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi is our newest affiliate, and it gives promise of growing into a vital organization of the blind which will play an important role in shaping the future in Mississippi.

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DISABILITY INSURANCE  
FOR THE BLIND-  
A LETTER FROM A FEDERATIONIST

Dear Dr. Jernigan:

Thought I would try to write to you as I have not wrote you for a good while. We have been having a lot of trouble for the last two months. My wife got sick and had to go to the hospital. She was there about five weeks. After she was there about two weeks, they found that she had lung cancer. They took part of her right lung out. They said they got it all, I sure hope they did and that the good Lord will help her to get well. She is all that I have to live for. She will not be able to work any more. She is trying again to get her social security. Don't know whether she can get it or not. We would like to move to our home at \_\_\_\_\_ if she can get it. It costs so much to live with just one working and having rent to pay.

I would like to see this Social Security bill past this year for the blind. I would like to ask everybody that reads the Braille Monitor to write their senators and

congressman about this Social Security bill. It would be more help to the blind than any law that could pass. They have past some laws that is a lot of help to the blind and some that helps a few a little. They are trying to get some laws past that would help some of the blind. One is this: for a blind and a sighted person to travel by air for the price of one. That would help a few blind people, but how many? That would help a lot of sighted people more than it would the blind. The airlines can't make ends meet now. I think most blind people can travel alone if they want to. How many blind people is there that don't travel by air? That would not be any help to them at all. The blind man would have to pay the sighted's way to get him to go with him. Who would it help the most?

There is a few laws that has been past that help the blind some. That is to mail Braille and some other things free for the blind. That is a good law. I write some Braille, but how many blind people is there that can't write Braille? Now, I am glad to see that law past.

What I am getting at is some that will help all of the blind. I was reading a while back where one blind man had wrote who was in a rest home. He said we get our Braille mailing free and a lot of other things. He thought it would put a lot more on the taxpayers. That kind of talk is one thing that hurts the blind. I don't see it that way, and I can't see any blind person who would look at it that way. There is a lot of people living on welfare. They're not allowed to save any money. If they do, they will take it away from them. They talk about the needy blind. Who is the needy blind? Is it the ones that don't have anything, and don't want anything?

Or is it the ones that would like to try to make a living and is afraid to try that they might get their welfare cut out? I say all blind is needy. The blind needs the right to live and spend their money the way they want to. Give the blind a living and then we can pay our way like other people.

I have mist a few words in this letter, but I guess you can make out what it means. I have worded this letter the best I could. I would just like for you to ask all that reads the Braille Monitor to have a part in trying to get the Disability Insurance bill past. That would be a great help to the blind. Now, if I was all the one that needed that bill past, I would just say, "the hell with me." But we all need that bill, that we might feel free to do what we like with our money like other people.

Yours truly,

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All our readers are encouraged to contact their Senators and Representatives and urge their support for the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill (S. 1335) introduced by Senator Vance Hartke. Ask your Congressmen to notify Senator Russell Long, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, of their support for the bill and to urge Committee approval of this measure.

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COORDINATOR OF  
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE  
SPEAKS OUT

In the December issue of the *Monitor* under the title "AFB Makes No Answer"



Campbell to M. Robert Barnett concerning the "Step-by-Step Guide for Personal Management for Blind Persons" published by the American Foundation for the Blind. The Foundation has now replied in a letter with unique overtones.

It would appear that Mr. Albert Asenjo, a member of the staff of the American Foundation, admits that he coordinated and directed the project which resulted in the publication of "A Step-by-Step Guide for Personal Management for Blind Persons." It will be seen that he alleges that nothing but praise has come the Foundation's way as a result--except, regrettably, three letters of criticism from blind people, two of them from Mrs. Campbell. Perhaps he has misunderstood the tone of public opinion about his work, and one wonders whether he and the American Foundation for the Blind may not receive a good many more letters in the months ahead.

Mrs. Campbell wrote to President Jernigan, commenting on the AFB response.

December 20, 1971

Dear Dr. Jernigan:

Can you believe it! As you see, I did get a letter from the AFB, but not from M. Robert Barnett. Note the reason given for the procrastination--and all the other stupid reasoning--note several THOUSAND copies of such worthless trash. Can it be possible that only one other person wrote to them--following your banquet speech? Can't you just see that "at least one blind person" demonstrating all the "steps" for such an ambitious sighted group? Isn't he giving

me just the "usual line" of defense?

However, if Mr. Asenjo is speaking truthfully, what is the use of my pursuing the issue further? Does this not back up still further our need to work as a group--that one can do little alone? Are you the other person who wrote to them? Or could it be our Isabelle Grant? We sat together at the banquet, and that lady seemed ready for action.

Best Holiday wishes to you and yours.

Faternally,

Dorothy Campbell

P.S. No admission was made of the receipt of my letter in which I stated my amazement at having received two requests for donations when my letter of Aug. 31 had not been answered. You do have a copy of that letter, don't you?

D.C.

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December 14, 1971

Mrs. Dorothy N. Campbell  
119 South Main Street  
Newtown, Connecticut 06470

Dear Mrs. Campbell:

Your personal letter to Mr. M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director of the American Foundation for the Blind, was referred to several persons in the AFB, and finally reached my desk for reply. As I was the person assigned to coordinate the "Step-by-Step Guide to Personal Management for Blind Persons", I have

procrastinated in responding to your letter as I was, and am, of the opinion that some person less closely associated with the Guide would be more objective in their reply.

At a regional conference of personnel of rehabilitation centers for the blind, held in Minneapolis in 1965, the group devoting their attentions to personal management services requested me to ask the Administration of the AFB to develop a manual or guide which would serve as a teaching instrument for both new personnel coming into the field of services to the blind and for blind clients. After a rather careful review for the need of such a manual, it was decided that the AFB would undertake the project. In 1967, 1968 and 1969, workshops were held to develop each activity as written in the Guide. We were very careful to select persons knowledgeable in the field of personal management to participate in the workshops. The selected persons included blind and sighted people. On each committee there was always at least one blind person. In some instances the person was congenitally blind and in others the person was adventitiously blinded. I am sure you realize that this care was taken so that each activity could be tested by a blind person as it was being developed.

When this Guide was completed and preparation was under way for its being published, we were aware that there were many blind persons who would have little or no need for it, while at the same time instructors in rehabilitation centers and in other rehabilitation settings felt that there was a great need for it by many clients. Since its publication we have sold several thousand copies and we have had but three letters with a negative opinion about

the book, two of which were from you, one directed to Mr. Barnett and one to the Library of Congress. I can only be led to believe that you are a very fortunate individual because you are evidently able to carry out all your personal management needs without assistance from anyone. This is not the case for the majority of blind people. By publishing this book, we in no way meant to give anyone the opinion that a blind person is "an idiot" or is unable to care for many of his needs, but we did develop and publish it because of the request from the field. Rehabilitation centers serving blind people now find that at least sixty per cent of their clients are multi-handicapped and are in need of a step-by-step teaching effort in order to help the client function as independently as his capacities will allow. The 44 people who were involved in the development of this Guide are pleased with the results, and from the very many positive reviews it has received, we realize that our work was not for naught.

I sincerely hope this will give you our viewpoint of the Guide and will help you to understand that although it is of no use to you, it is serving those blind persons who are in need of this level of training.

Very truly yours,

J. Albert Asenjo  
Specialist in Rehabilitation

JAA/pc

P.S. Mr. Barnett remembers quite well his association with you at the Seeing Eye and has asked me to include his personal best wishes for a happy holiday season. Incidentally, he does not now use a dog.

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## RIGHTS COMMISSION WEIGHS BLIND BIAS CHARGE

by  
Sylvia Lang

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Saint Cloud (Minn.) Times.]

Feedback on past commission proceedings provided food for thought for the St. Cloud Human Rights Commission at City Hall.

The primary feedback item was a letter sent to the commission by Kenneth Jernigan, President of the National Federation of the Blind, concerning the St. Cloud State College Education Department's denial of discrimination against the blind.

Enclosed in Jernigan's letter was an article from the March, 1971 "Braille Monitor", which quoted a letter written Nov. 30, 1970 by SCSC Education Dean Irvamae Applegate regarding admission of a prospective blind student to the SCSC school of education. In this letter, Dean Applegate said:

"It is true that we do not admit students to teacher education who have physical handicaps that would interfere with their carrying out their teaching responsibilities."

"The reason for this," she said, "is that we are not able to provide a total program of preparation which includes student teaching."

She also wrote, "A teacher has certain legal responsibilities for the safety and welfare of the children with whom she works. A person who has any kind of

handicap which would prevent him from being fully responsible for the safety of the children would prevent a person from being able to perform all of the functions expected of a teacher."

Dean Applegate said SCSC couldn't provide student teaching assignments because of this "liability factor." In addition, she said, "From our experience, individuals with limiting handicaps are unable to secure employment."

In an Oct. 15 Times article, on the other hand, Dean Applegate was quoted from a letter written Sept. 9 to the state director of Services for the Blind which stated:

"... The school of education at St. Cloud State College does not have an admissions policy that singles out blind students as a special case. The same rules and admissions requirements apply to blind students as apply to others."

In the "Braille Monitor" article, entitled "The Blind-Do They Exist?", Jernigan used Dean Applegate's original letter as an example of discrimination against the blind.

"St. Cloud State College," he said, "excludes them all. They exclude 'the blind'-the rich and the poor, the Methodist and the atheist, the young and the old, the bright and the stupid."

In Jernigan's letter to the commission, he said the matter "should be brought to the attention of the public and it should receive vigorous action from responsible state and local officials. The organized blind have every intention of pursuing it with determination."

Lee Barker, commission chairman, said "Communication with Dr. Applegate is needed" before making judgments on the matter.

Commission member Phyllis Janey said she had "certain reservations about looking further into this matter until we know for sure whether this commission wants to take on the whole matter of physical disabilities."

A representative from the commission, however, was assigned to get a response from SCSC regarding the Jernigan charge and whether the SCSC school of education's policy on admitting blind students has changed since Dean Applegate's original letter. . . .

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#### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION- FEDERAL-STATE COMMUNICATIONS

Some four years ago the Congress enacted Public Law 90-23, the Freedom of Information Act. In a memo dated December 8, 1971 the Administrator of the Social and Rehabilitation Service, HEW, implemented the law by making correspondence and other documents more readily available to the public--mostly documents furnished to or received from State agencies. The memo states:

"We have had to review carefully our past policies regarding the release of information to the public and to the news media. We have found that the biggest need is to reemphasize the SRS and the Department position that information and records should be made readily available unless there are overriding reasons to the

contrary. It is not the intention of the Freedom of Information Act or the Department's Public Information Regulation that all records falling into an exempt category are for that reason to be withheld from disclosure. On the contrary, both clearly subscribe to the concept of fullest possible disclosure.

"We have, therefore, reached certain policy decisions with regard to the release of information falling into the general category of Federal-State communications. The purpose of this memorandum is to assure that there is a common understanding between agencies of SRS and State agencies as to what those policies are.

"The general, over-all policy is that communications between SRS and State agencies, and internal SRS communications furnished to a State are not automatically exempt from disclosure under P.L. 90-23 or the Department's Public Information Regulation.

"In keeping with the concept of fullest possible disclosure, SRS will henceforth consider that correspondence and documents between SRS and State and local agencies, and internal SRS letters, memorandums or documents furnished to a State or local agency, are in the public domain and are available to news media representatives and members of the public. This includes Section 1115 project proposals and State plan material which will be considered available for release on request when received at the SRS office having approval authority."

This new policy should mean that the State rehabilitation plans, vending stand documents, break-downs of the plans

involved in rehabilitation closures, and other pertinent information will be available to NFB affiliates upon request to SRS Regional Commissioners.

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## 'TRAGEDY' OF BLINDNESS IS IN THE EYES OF THE SIGHTED

by  
Marjorie Freeman

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Santa Ana (Calif.) *Register*.]

Loss of vision isn't a tragedy, it's an inconvenience, says Don Brown, seventh grade geography teacher at Dale Junior High, "although people view it as a tragedy, and that's the tragedy, I suppose."

Brown should know; he's blind.

Now in the fourth week of his contract with the Anaheim Union High School District after doing substitute teaching last year and part of this, Brown was a student teacher here in 1969 and has high praise for the administration's acceptance of him with his handicap, rather than despite it.

"I've come across some blatant cases of discrimination during my job hunting because I was blind and obviously there were other cases I didn't know about," he said.

"No one hates the blind, but we're discriminated against, none the less," he added, "even though the White Cane law of 1967 says it's illegal to discriminate against a person because he's blind."

Brown, sightless since the age of 14 because of a congenital condition, says his students are more helpful to him than probably they are to sighted teachers, because: "I give, and they accept, responsibility."

"Kids relate differently," he went on. "Right off, I tell them to speak up, not to raise their hands, and they relate to me as a person. I've never had a major discipline problem because of this rapport. I don't care if you're eight foot six inches with four eyes and 20-20 vision in each pair--there's still 35 of them and one of you. Lack of discipline, I believe, comes from boredom."

Talking with the 30-ish, modishly dressed, perfectly groomed Brown, it's difficult to keep in mind he's blind. He shows the visitor around, chatting humorously, and in the teacher's lounge, finds without any problem "the guest cup" for the coffee he pours.

Brown hires college students to read his students' papers and he dictates the grades.

"I rent eyes," he said. "Blindness is a luxury not everyone can afford."

He reads and "writes" Braille and listens to books on records or magnetic tape in addition to his readers.

Brown will receive his master's degree in June and at Dale is "waiting with bated breath" for his first extracurricular assignment. "I can't wait to chaperone a dance," he said lightly.

Born in Pennsylvania, Brown entered Overbrook School for the Blind, a

Philadelphia residential establishment at 14 years and after graduation from there, came to California and studied first at Fullerton Junior College and then Cal State Fullerton where he received his bachelor's degree and secondary school teaching credentials.

Nothing was done to prepare him for his sightlessness, he says, although his vision deteriorated gradually and relentlessly.

"It was something we didn't talk about," he said. "Then in the fourth grade I spent a week in an eye hospital. When my sight deteriorated to the point where I couldn't read the largest print, I was sent to the residential school."

Brown learned to read Braille in six weeks, but carefully points out that speed and competency in Braille depends on the emotional attitude to it. Some sightless persons cannot bring themselves to learn

When sight goes, he says, "The thing you notice first is that you can't see." He believes the loss of vision can be compensated for "on the average" in about six weeks.

Brown uses the word "average" frequently in conversation because, as president of the Orange County chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of California--"That's 'of' the blind and not 'for' the blind," he stressed--his mission is the integration of the blind into society and emphasizing that the average sightless person is really no different from the average sighted.

"The average blind man can do the average job," he says, listing some of the

jobs sightless persons hold: teaching, psychiatrist, medical transcriber, business executive, X-ray technician, cook, ski instructor, taxi company dispatcher.

Well-meaning efforts to help the sightless, if they weren't understood to be well meaning, could be resented, he said.

"We're grabbed and propelled across streets we may not want to cross, and sometimes even pushed out of a room and disoriented. The most helpful thing sighted people can do to help the blind is to ask first if we need help. If the blind person says 'no,' believe him. Too often we're approached and shoved like a sack of potatoes.

"Then there is the kindhearted sighted person who is reluctant to ask if we need help because he feels it's too unpleasant for a blind person to discuss. So he just grabs us, aims and pushes. Fortunately, everyone here understands, and this doesn't happen at Dale."

Brown is looking for more blind persons to join the National Federation of the Blind, for which he also is employment coordinator for the chapter's committee on employment assistance.

"I receive weekly lists of job openings from federal, state, some county and some city governments along with weekly lists of unemployed blind persons and the work that interests them.

"The unemployment among the blind is phenomenal, and one reason is the California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation trains but does not place trainees in jobs.

"My committee is looking for the names of more unemployed blind people because the state and welfare lists are not open to us. We learn of jobs blind people can do but don't know who can do them."

Brown can be reached at 226 S. Broadview St., Anaheim, where he lives with his wife and children.

The chapter is forming a speaker's bureau with speakers available to address local groups and if enough young blind people are interested, a youth division will be formed, Brown said.

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#### COMMUNICATION FROM NFB PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues:

This is one of those letters which I send you from time to time to bring you up to date on happenings throughout the Federation. My first item is the happy news that on Saturday, January 14, the National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi came into being. This is the first time we have ever had a Mississippi affiliate, and the members of the organizing team tell me it is a good one. John Taylor took a week of his vacation time and went to Mississippi on January 6 to lay the groundwork. He had with him one of the strongest organizing teams we have ever put into the field, and the results give evidence of the hard work which was done. Other members of the team were Marshall Tucker of South Carolina; Lou Corbin of Florida, president of the NFB Lawyers' Division; Mary Hartle of Minnesota; Harvey Webb of Louisiana; Dick Edlund, president of our Kansas

affiliate; Peggy Pender of Iowa; Mark Maurer, president of the Student Division; Dick Jones of Idaho; Nellie Hargrove, president of our Tennessee affiliate; and Loren Schmitt, now of Idaho. On Friday night, January 14, Don Capps came to Mississippi to preside at the organizing meeting the next day. The groundwork had been well laid by Mr. E. U. Parker, one of the most successful blind people in the state. Federationists will remember Mr. Parker from the Houston Convention.

I will not take more time here to give you details on the formation of the affiliate since you will soon be reading about it in *The Monitor*. However, I will say that Mr. Albert Beasley of Jackson was elected president, and Mr. Parker was elected vice-president. From what I hear and from what I saw of Mr. Parker in Houston, they will make a good team. So, hurrah for Mississippi. I am sure that all of you join me in welcoming the National Federation of the Blind of Mississippi into the family of affiliates and that you join me in welcoming the blind of the state into our movement.

Next I would like to say a few words to you about our financial affairs. Last year was a very successful one for us monetarily. In fact, as you will see when the financial reports are given at the Convention this summer, it was the best year we have ever had. However, there were, as you might expect, problem areas. At the fall Board meeting, for instance, we decided to close out Nu-Mode Plastics, which continued to fail to show a profit, and to concentrate our efforts elsewhere. This has been done, and Nu-Mode is no more.

This still leaves the question of the

NFB coasters we discussed and began making available at the Houston Convention. The mold for the coasters belongs to the NFB, and we are still using it. You will remember that state and local affiliates were urged to sell NFB coasters as a good means of fundraising for themselves, an excellent way to publicize the Federation, and a method of putting extra dollars in the national treasury. Four individual coasters are packaged in each box, and a hundred boxes are contained in each shipping carton. Each carton of a hundred boxes can be purchased from the National Office for \$50 and sold for one dollar a box, thus making \$50 for the affiliate.

In the summer and fall affiliates were experiencing problems in prompt delivery of coasters. This situation has now been remedied. We have on hand in the National Office 250 hundred-box cartons packaged and ready to go. All you have to do is send me a check at the above address, made payable to the National Federation of the Blind in the amount of \$50 for each hundred-box carton you wish, and you will receive prompt delivery with all shipping and postage costs paid. In other words, your only cost will be \$50 per carton, and you can clear \$50. This is an excellent method of fundraising and of advertising our organization, and I urge that state and local affiliates give it a try.

Let me next talk to you about the Headquarters building for the NFB. You will remember that, at the Houston Convention, we passed a resolution authorizing the purchase or construction of our own building. Plans are now well advanced to bring this about. I have talked with architects and am negotiating for land. This is a most exciting project, and I

hope that construction can be under way by Convention time. As soon as the location is definitely chosen and the approximate costs determined, the Executive Committee will probably assemble to discuss the details of the project. In view of the crowded and inadequate nature of our present quarters I am looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to the day when we will have our own building—one more evidence that the Federation is really on the move.

As we draw closer to Convention time, I hope you have made your plans to attend and that you have sent your request for reservations to the Palmer House in Chicago. The program is shaping up to be the best ever, and the facilities are as good as we have ever had. I am confident that we will have more than 1000 people at the banquet this year and that we will have at least 1500 in attendance. Most people will probably begin arriving by Sunday, July 2, and will probably not start home until the following Sunday. It will be a week to remember. New aids and devices will be demonstrated; various interest groups will be meeting on Monday afternoon; thousands of dollars worth of prizes will be dispensed; and the agenda will be packed with items of interest. Come and join us in Chicago, and be sure to send for your reservations now.

Speaking of prizes, remember that each state and local affiliate is urged to contribute at least one prize, preferably valued at \$25 and up.

I should remind you that the Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship will be given again this year and that applications are now being received. We will give one



scholarship in the amount of \$1200. Applicants must be recommended by their state or local affiliate, and the winner must attend the Convention to receive the check. The deadline for receipt of applications is May 1. All correspondence should be addressed to the Scholarship Committee at 2652 Shasta Road, Berkeley, California 94708. If you know a blind student who needs a scholarship, this is a good opportunity. An application form is being enclosed along with this letter. Additional forms are available on request.

By now most of you know about this year's NFB Christmas record. The project was a tremendous success. It would have been better if the idea had occurred earlier, permitting us to get the record out in the late summer or early fall. However, it did not, and we did not. Most radio stations did not receive their record until early December. (Some claimed they never received it at all, but in most cases such claims were probably of doubtful validity. It is easy to mislay a record.)

In any case, the record received wide and favorable coverage. It was played on radio stations throughout the country, and I have had a veritable flood of positive reaction. The record was sent to each state and local president. (If your affiliate did not get one, then you had better check to see whether you are on my State and Chapter mailing list.)

Quite a number of people have asked whether they can get the record for their personal use or for gifts. The answer is yes. All you need to do is send a check to me at the above address, made payable to the National Federation of the Blind in the amount of \$2 for each record you wish.

They will be sent to you promptly. Further, we will have them on hand at the national Convention. We are going to ask members to take copies and deliver them personally to radio stations in their areas with the request that they be played at Christmas time. People taking records for such purposes, will of course, not be asked to pay for them. Only when the record is for personal use will the individual be asked to buy it.

As I have already said, the Federation continues to be on the move. One evidence of this is the constant growth of *The Monitor*. For the February issue we are printing 11,520 copies. March will be bigger, especially with the Mississippi lists included. At Convention time you will receive an updated report on current *Monitor* status.

Remember that you can get a variety of materials by writing to the Des Moines or Berkeley offices. Every Federationist, as we have often said, should own and wear an NFB pin. These are attractive, and they tell the world who and what we are. You may get pins for \$2 each by writing to the Berkeley office, 2652 Shasta Road, Berkeley, California 94708.

Print, Braille, and recorded Federation material is available on request—recordings of recent banquets, of the NAC discussion at Houston, the Thirty Year History, the article on how to build and strengthen local affiliates, and a variety of other speeches and articles. All you have to do is ask. The material is available promptly and at no charge to you. Let's spread the word.

Before I leave this subject, I would like to remind you again of the availability

of disc recordings of the 1971 Houston Convention. The full twelve record set can be had for \$15 by sending to the National Office a check made payable to the National Federation of the Blind. These records are of good quality and should receive wide distribution.

I cannot resist the temptation to end this letter on a personal note. I am dictating it on a Sunday afternoon by telephone to Hazel tenBroek as she sits in the Berkeley Office. Earlier today I used, for the second time, a delightful present which I received for Christmas. It is a rather novel meat smoker—which uses about ten pounds of charcoal, above which is placed a pan of water. Above that are placed two racks which can hold as much as twenty to twenty-five pounds of meat. All of this is enclosed in a steel cylinder. I forgot to say that the charcoal, after it is lit and going, is liberally covered with hickory blocks. You put in your meat and do not open the lid for six to eight hours. The results are absolutely mouth watering and delightful. Day before yesterday I cooked two pork roasts, two beef roasts, and a chicken, most of which (having been widely shared around) has now gone the way of all flesh. Today I am cooking three chickens, two pork roasts, and a beef roast. Again, many will participate, and the product will soon be consumed. It is a great way to go.

Cordially,

Kenneth Jernigan, President  
National Federation of the Blind

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## CALIFORNIA DIVISION FOR THE BLIND RESTORED

State of California  
Department of Social Welfare  
Contact: Charles D. Hobbs  
Release No. 103  
January 5, 1972

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sacramento. Relocation of the Division for the Blind in the Department places administration directly at the highest level and is in response to the concerns of the California Council of the Blind, State Welfare Director Robert D. Carleson said.

The Council had complaints about the apparent lower placement of the Division in the Department organization, Carleson said, and his action means that the Division Chief will report directly to him on policy matters and to Deputy Director Charles D. Hobbs on operations.

The change also eliminates the civil service position of Chief of Special Services at an estimated annual savings of \$20,000.

The Division for the Blind administers public assistance for an estimated 14,000 blind recipients in California including self-support aid and training as appropriate. "This action is designed to give the Department leadership more direct and efficient access to the problems of the needy blind in this State," Carleson declared, "and should reassure them that their needs remain at a high priority of interest."

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## MEET OUR STATE PRESIDENT—GLENN CROSBY AND MEET OUR STATE AFFILIATE—TEXAS

Our President, Glenn Crosby, was born 26 years ago in Beaumont, Texas. He was blinded as a result of two separate childhood accidents. He attended and graduated from the Texas School for the Blind. He is presently enrolled in the University of Houston where he has a junior standing. He hopes to go on to law school when he finishes his undergraduate work.

Glenn is at present the owner of the snack bar in the Family Law Center at Houston, Texas. This is one of the three courthouses located in downtown Houston. This is not the only job he has held, however. He has been a piano tuner, played in a band, been a masseur and also worked for OEO in Houston.

As well as being State president, which he gained by virtue of Mrs. Gladys Taylor's resignation in August because of health reasons, he is the president of the Houston Council of the Blind, one of the Houston affiliates of the National Federation of the Blind of Texas.

The National Federation of the Blind of Texas, formerly known as the Bluebonnet State Federation of the Blind, was reorganized in 1967 by NFB President Kenneth Jernigan. It has since that time grown to five chapters. It was with the

help of these chapters that the National Federation of the Blind national Convention was held in Houston in July, 1971.

Since our reorganization, we have been able to have our State Legislature pass a major portion of the Model White Cane Law. With Jim Nyman of San Antonio now heading our legislative committee, it is hoped that we will be able to have a complete Model White Cane Law passed. Our members are feverishly working to get all of the necessary materials together so we may present them to our State Legislature when it convenes in 1972.

Our board members are Glenn Crosby, Louis Vinson, Bernice Ruffin, Malcolm Coney, Albert Wilson, Linda Allumbaugh, Ernest West and Patsy Akers. It is with their direction and help that we are attempting to build a stronger and larger State affiliate. These board members are drawn from all of our local affiliates and they are attempting to contact and organize chapters in other cities.

The National Federation of the Blind of Texas is now engaged in a battle with the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Southern Pacific refused to sell a ticket to our members Linda Allumbaugh and



Glenn Crosby because they are blind. We have filed complaints with the Federal Attorney's office and also with the District Attorney of Harris County. We hope to have this in the courts in the very near future.

By the end of 1971, we will have many more irons in the fire aimed at improving the lot of the blind of Texas. We will strive to see that many more jobs are available and hopefully filled by the blind of Texas. It is with this in mind that we carry on. Until all of us see all of you in Chicago in 1972, we will continue to carry the cause forward here on the western front.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### TIME OUT

by

Nellie Hargrove

It was beginning to get dark when Elaine brought the car to a stop in front of the old, well-kept farm house. From a lighted door, the familiar voice of Dr. Jernigan rang out with an invitation to come inside. Since the death of my parents, spending a part of Christmas on the Jernigan farm at Beech Grove, Tennessee, has become a tradition and going back to the big two-story house is like going home again.

Dr. Jernigan, dressed in casual sports wear instead of his usual tailor's blue, held the door wide and became impatient when we stopped to pet the big collie. Inside, a fire glowed in the large living room; and the delightful odor of Mrs. Jernigan's turkey and dressing and fresh turnips filled the air. The other guests, aunts and uncles of Dr. Jernigan, made us welcome and

settled back to continue their conversation about farming and the local people. Dr. Jernigan joined in the conversation, not with the voice of authority which was so familiar to me when he was a teacher, but with all of the congeniality of a Tennessee farm boy. He joked with his uncle, and he teased Elaine about the mistletoe.

We sat down to the dinner table, which was abundantly filled with delicious food; and we all ate until we were uncomfortable. During dinner, a conversation about the Bible developed; and Dr. Jernigan quoted a scripture which was not familiar to the rest of us. He proved its existence with chapter and verse.

After dinner, four of the guests played rook while the rest of us sat around the fire and talked. Dr. Jernigan's father talked about the earlier years on the farm, and everybody reminisced, remembering when life was less hurried. For one evening, we did not talk about the complex problems which confront the blind citizens of this country nor about the efforts of NFB on behalf of all of the blind.

For a short time, Dr. Jernigan put aside his thoughts and his concern and took time out to be himself. He slowed the hectic pace of his life long enough to enjoy a Christmas dinner with his family. From the Iowa Commission for the Blind and from the National Federation of the Blind, he took a brief time out.

All too soon it was time for Elaine and me to go; and over the protests of our hosts and invitations from aunts and uncles to spend the night, we said good night. We left the big farm house so much

richer than when we came because they had given to us the warmth of a family's togetherness, which we had not known for a while. We drove home in contented silence, and I wondered at the greatness of a man.

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## REHABILITATION OF THE DISABLED by Ralph Treitel\*

[Reprinted from the Social Security *Bulletin*, published by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.]

For many workers who are disabled, the negative consequences of incapacity--unemployment, social isolation, and limits on mobility--can be reduced or minimized through the mediation of rehabilitation services. According to the findings of the 1966 Social Security Survey of Disabled Adults, however, only a small proportion of the disabled feel a need for such services or are referred to the agencies that provide them.

In 1966, of the 18 million persons aged 18-64 with some work limitation that was the result of a health condition, about 1 in 8 reported having received some type of rehabilitation service in the past and about 1 in 7 expressed an interest in obtaining any service or additional services in the future. Among those who did not receive any services, fewer than 1 out of 20 tried to get them.

This article presents data from the Survey on the receipt of rehabilitation services and on the current interest in obtaining services that was indicated by the disabled, in terms of selected

demographic and disability characteristics.<sup>1</sup> These characteristics include age, sex, severity of disability, employment status before and after the disablement, income-maintenance status, education, and family status.

The Survey was based on a national household sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population aged 18-64. Disability was defined as a limitation in the kind or amount of work that was the result of a chronic health condition or impairment lasting 7 months or longer. The extent of incapacity ranged from the inability to perform any kind of work to secondary limitations in the kind performed.

All the disabled persons interviewed in the Survey were asked (1) if they had received rehabilitation services in the past, (2) if they had tried to get services, and (3) if they were currently interested in receiving services. Information was obtained on the kind of services received or wanted and the reasons why services were not received.

Rehabilitation was identified in terms of the type of service provided: job training; job placement; tools, equipment, or licenses; guidance and counseling; physical therapy; special devices such as a brace; training for leisure activity; or other services. The services were those furnished by any agency or individual "regularly providing such services," including clinics, physicians, and public agencies such as vocational rehabilitation agencies.

The Survey data show that 2.1 million of the disabled, or 12 percent of the 17.8 million disabled noninstitutionalized adults aged 18-64 in

the United States, had received services. For one-third of the 2.1 million persons, the services were received in 1965; two-thirds of them received services before that year. Not included in these estimates were persons who received services in the past and had recovered from the disability, died, or become institutionalized.

The treatment for a medical condition and the services to reduce the disabling effects of that condition may not be readily distinguishable. For this reason and because some persons may have forgotten the source of the services received, underreporting of services may exist. On the other hand, overreporting could occur for persons who received only medical services but listed them as types of rehabilitation services.

The total number of disabled persons aged 18-64 in the 1966 Survey of Noninstitutionalized Disabled included: 6.1 million severely disabled who were unable to work regularly or at all; 5.0 million occupationally disabled who were able to work regularly but not full time or at the same work; and 6.6 million with secondary work limitations who were able to work full time at the same job (including housework) after they became disabled.

The proportion of the severely disabled who received rehabilitation services was about the same as that for the occupationally disabled, and it was higher than the proportion for those with secondary work limitations. The same pattern was evident with respect to current interest in receiving services: roughly similar proportions of the severely disabled and of the occupationally disabled expressed such interest, with a

smaller percentage of those with secondary work limitation interested in seeking services.

It might have been expected that those with less severe disabilities would use rehabilitation services more often. Persons with partial disabilities are more likely to be capable of sustained productive work, and help can be provided for them with less expense and less effort than for the more severely disabled. But it is the loss of ability to carry on a job or other personal tasks that provides a strong incentive to the individual to seek help. Thus, if the impairment does not threaten the immediate work role or produce dependency at home, the individual and family may look to their own management of the incapacity rather than to professional rehabilitation agents for help. The costs of professional services, the limits on available services, and the social conventions inhibiting concern with minor health problems may all contribute to less involvement with rehabilitation services on the part of the partially disabled than of the severely disabled.

When receipt of services is related to functional limitations, a greater involvement in rehabilitation services by persons with more extensive restrictions is clear. Participation in these services was about 50 percent higher for persons with severe functional limitations or those functionally dependent than for those with less extensive limitations. This substantial difference reflects primarily the receipt of physical therapy and special devices. Twelve percent of the severely disabled with severe functional losses had received physical therapy services but only 4 percent of those with moderate losses. These services, often provided by

physicians, may be related to treatment for particular types of disabling conditions such as nervous system disorders.

Advanced age clearly has a negative effect on prospects for return to work and on the performance of other social activities, apart from the biological association with decrease in function and susceptibility to chronic disease. According to a Survey study, "Social usage and employment practice suggest that chronological age influences capacity evaluation as an independent status attribute."<sup>2</sup>

As the data show, the proportion of the disabled receiving services drops from 17 percent of those under age 45 to 7 percent of those aged 55 and over (including 4 percent of the retired workers aged 62-64). This decline with advancing age occurs even though aging may increase vocational problems and is associated with a gradual process of deterioration. Rehabilitation services thus seem to be provided for older persons in accordance with productivity expectations rather than potential usefulness.

Because of their limited resources and the need to show results for their efforts in providing services, referral agents and rehabilitation agencies may be expected to give greater consideration to younger disabled persons. The young are more likely to have traumatic injuries or the kind of impairments that often show significant improvement after rehabilitation services are provided—unlike the chronic, progressive diseases associated with aging. Younger persons also tend to have fewer multiple conditions and greater residual capacity.

The older disabled persons themselves express lessened interest in services. Despite their prospects for progressive reduction in capacity, fewer of the disabled at ages 55-64 were interested in receiving services than those under age 55 (1 in 10, compared with 1 in 6).

Relatively more men than women received services. At the younger ages, the differences were greatest: Among the severely disabled aged 18-54, about 25 percent of the men obtained services, compared with fewer than 15 percent of the women.

Among all the disabled, men and women were about equally interested in obtaining services. Among the severely disabled, however, 25 percent of the men said they were currently interested in services but only 15 percent of the women. The greater involvement of men in paid employment may account for their greater interest in rehabilitation services.

More than 40 percent of the 2.1 million disabled who received rehabilitation services had musculoskeletal disorders as their primary disabling condition. This high proportion is not entirely explained by the sizable representation of that diagnostic group among the disabled (31 percent of the total). Many musculoskeletal impairments are caused by injury and not by progressive disease processes, and injuries to the spine, back, or limbs are usually more subject to improvement or stabilization than degenerative disorders are.

Among those with musculoskeletal disorders, higher proportions of the occupationally disabled (21 percent) than

of the severely disabled (12 percent) received services. For most of the other diagnostic groups, the severely disabled had the highest percentage of recipients. The occupationally disabled with musculoskeletal disorders were more likely than the severely disabled to receive physical therapy and special devices.

The disabled with nervous system disorders had the highest recipient rate (32 percent), largely because of their particular need for physical therapy and special devices. A high proportion of persons with mental and visual disorders also received services. Those with genito-urinary disorders, neoplasms, cardiovascular disorders, respiratory disorders, digestive disorders, and diabetes were less likely to have received services.

One third of all disabled who received services reported that their doctor either provided the services or arranged for them--an indication of the close relationship between treatment of the medical condition and help directed at the need for rehabilitation. About half of those who received services had physical therapy; about half of the recipients of physical therapy or special devices said that those services had been arranged for or provided by the recipients' own physician.

Public agencies involved in providing services included State vocational rehabilitation agencies (19 percent), the Veterans Administration (18 percent), and public welfare agencies (9 percent). For more than a third of those receiving vocational services, State vocational rehabilitation agencies had sponsored or arranged for the services. (These agencies reported nearly 500,000 disabled persons

in rehabilitation service status in the fiscal year 1966.)

Public agencies that do not directly provide rehabilitation services may act as referral channels to providers of services. Social security and public assistance agencies refer applicants for disability payments to vocational rehabilitation agencies as a part of their regular procedures. Since 1966, the social security trust funds have been used to reimburse the State agencies for rehabilitation services to selected disability beneficiaries.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately one-fifth of those getting disability benefits under OASDHI received rehabilitation services; only about one-tenth of those not getting public income-maintenance payments received such services. Relatively more of the disabled with income-maintenance payments than of those without these payments showed interest in obtaining rehabilitation services. Among the severely disabled, as might be expected, there was less difference with respect to interest in services between those with and those without payments from income-maintenance programs.

The large number of disabled-worker beneficiaries who received physical therapy (14 percent) largely accounts for the high proportion (22 percent) of these disabled beneficiaries receiving any rehabilitation services. This fact may indicate, for the disabled beneficiaries, a greater degree of medical impairments rather than any greater involvement in vocational rehabilitation programs.

Of those who received services, nearly 3 out of 4 felt that the services



helped them. Among those helped, the largest proportions indicated that the help consisted of increased mobility and self-confidence. Obtaining a job was the type of help less often received than any of the other specific kinds of help.

In general those who did not receive services felt that such services would not be useful. The majority stated they did not need the services or that services wouldn't help. Those who had previously received services were more likely to be currently interested in obtaining them.

Attachment to the labor force might be expected to lead to greater involvement in rehabilitation services. Among those currently employed, 1 in 5 who received services said they were helped in obtaining a job. In the proportion receiving services among all the disabled, however, there was little difference between those currently employed and those who were not.

Interest in obtaining services was related both to adequacy of income and to dependency. A greater proportion of the poor than of those with more nearly adequate income expressed interest in obtaining services. Among the severely disabled, those with less than 4 years of high school expressed interest in services at twice the rate of those with a college education—a reflection, clearly, of the greater vocational handicaps of the former group. Labor-market opportunities may play as great a part in return to work as individual efforts to manage impairment. (Studies of recovery among disability beneficiaries have indicated that a large percentage of those who return to substantial competitive employment go back to work for former employers.)<sup>4</sup>

Dependent family members were more interested in obtaining services than were household heads or their spouses—an indication that such interest may be the expression of the undesirability of dependency as much as the obligations for work performance.

Loss of work is a critical, undesirable situation. The survey data show that the severely disabled tend to be more interested in rehabilitation services than persons with less incapacitating disabilities. A greater proportion of men received services, possibly because of their greater labor-force obligations.

It is sometimes argued that compensation will act as a partial disincentive to recovery, but the data show a higher rate of receipt of rehabilitation services and interest in obtaining services among those with income-maintenance payments than among the other disabled. This difference may be partly explained by such factors as the greater severity of the impairments of those receiving earnings-replacement benefits, the routinized referral by social agencies such as social security offices and welfare agencies to vocational rehabilitation agencies, and the inadequacy of benefits to meet the economic needs of the disabled. Dependent family status, low income, and inadequate education were all related to increased interest in obtaining services.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- \* Division of Disability Studies, Office of Research and Statistics. For a fuller report, see Ralph Treitel, *Rehabilitation*

of the Disabled, Report No. 12 from the Social Security Survey of the Disabled: 1966, Office of Research and Statistics, September 1970.

1. The Survey methods and sampling design are described in the Technical Note in Reports Nos. 1-14 from the Social Security Survey of the Disabled: 1966; see also the *Social Security Bulletin*, May 1968, page 22.
2. Lawrence D. Haber, "Age and Capacity Devaluation," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, September 1970.
3. Ralph Treitel, "Financing of Disability Beneficiary Rehabilitation," *Social Security Bulletin*, April 1969 pages 29-34.
4. Barbara Levinson and Jerome Green, "Return to Work After Severe Disability," *Journal of Chronic Disease*, 1965, pp. 167-180. Robert Ferguson, "A Followup of the 1963 Levinson and Green Study Sample," Social Security Administration, 1967.

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# SIGHTLESSNESS NOT LIFELESSNESS

by  
Dick Danis

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Dayton (Ohio) *Daily News*]

Brother John Soehnel began jogging four years ago. He was 62. He wanted some exercise, a routine to supplement his morning and evening regimen of push-ups.

Brother Soehnel, of the Marianist religious order, trots a measured mile daily

along the blacktop roadways on the sloping grounds of Bergamo on a hill overlooking Patterson Road.

As he runs, his slender, five-foot metal cane raps cadence on the curbing.

Brother Soehnel is blind. He's also afflicted with spinal arthritis.

Jogging is a plank in his philosophy of the blind, one he so aptly exemplifies.

"There's no reason the blind can't act like sighted people," he says. "It's a matter of attitude. There's no reason they can't get along well in school, on jobs and socially."

Brother Soehnel gets along so well there are times you can forget those blue eyes aimed right at you can't see.

A visitor, talking to Brother Soehnel in the breeze of an open window in a tiny reading room at Bergamo, found himself nodding silently, affirmative gestures the brother couldn't witness. Brother Soehnel said that kind of thing happens often.

And, as the discussion ended, Brother Soehnel asked where his cane was, the collapsible aluminum one he employs for finding his way clear when he's walking. The visitor shot a series of glances around the room and couldn't see it. "Oh, here it is," Brother Soehnel said, retrieving the cane from beneath a chair.

Brother Soehnel, a Brooklyn, N.Y., native, has been a Marianist here 50 years.

His blindness is the result of measles he contracted when he was one year old. Progressively, his sight deteriorated. He's

been legally blind for half a century.

He used to do farm work, finding the rugged labor exhilarating. The spinal arthritis forced him to quit that kind of toil in 1949. He is now the telephone operator at the Bergamo Center.

"I started jogging for reasons of health," he says. "I just started on my own, walking, then walking fast, then running. The doctor said it was fine for me."

Brother Soehnel, attired for a run in black slacks, blue shirt, white tennis shoes and his jogging cane, stood near the grotto on the Bergamo grounds and swept his hand across a network of narrow roads.

He knew where the road ambled, and again you forgot those large blue eyes reported no images to the man's mind. "First, I run down there, then around this way, then ... ."

Emphasizing his assertion that blind persons can hold their own, Brother Soehnel told smilingly of a soldier he met recently.

"This GI, he's 38, was blinded in '68 in Vietnam. He said he forgot that old rule—if you're shot in the butt, don't look up to see where the bullet came from.

"Anyway, now he's studying law. He wants to demonstrate he's just as good as anybody. And he's deeply interested in problems of the poor, the injustices in our welfare system."

Brother Soehnel returned to Dayton the other day from a six-week work trip to St. Mary's university in San Antonio,

Texas, where he and 40 fellow Marianist priests and brothers probed the resources, heritage and modernization of their order.

He jogged there, too, and capped his run with a brisk 20-minute swim daily at the university pool. He wasn't bothered by inability to see which end of the pool was deep. He strapped on a life belt.

The grammar school youngster who found his failing eyesight meant "I couldn't read books or see the blackboard or enjoy games with the others" is, for sure, enjoying himself now. And he hopes other blind persons will catch onto the discovery that darkness isn't a sentence to lifelessness.

"Don't fawn over the blind," he tells families of blinded men, women and children. And he insists, "It's a pity people keep their blindness hidden without going for help from the expert services available."

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## WELFARE MYTHS VS. FACTS

[Editor's Note: With a stepped-up attack on "the welfare mess" across the country, culminating in almost half of the State legislatures adopting restrictive laws governing public assistance, the Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has published a folder entitled "Welfare Myths vs. Facts." It seems particularly appropriate to publish the text of the folder at this time.]

### MYTH:

Welfare families are loaded with kids—and have more just to get more money.

**FACT:**

The typical welfare family has a mother and three children. Since 1967, the trend has been toward smaller families on welfare. The birth rate for welfare families, like the birth rate for the general population, is dropping.

Most children in welfare families (90 percent) are two years old or older. Studies show that the average family receives assistance for about two years. It is clear, then, that the majority of welfare children were conceived or born before the family applied for assistance. Also, the typical payment for an additional child is \$35 a month, hardly enough to cover the cost of rearing an additional child. Some States impose maximum payment limits; families reaching that ceiling—usually a 4- to 5-person family—get no additional money for another child.

**MYTH:**

Most welfare families are black.

**FACT:**

The largest racial group among welfare families—49 percent—is white.

Blacks represent about 46 percent. Most of the remaining 5 percent are American Indians, Orientals, and other racial minorities. Latin American families cut across racial lines; 14.4 percent of AFDC families are of Latin birth or ancestry: Mexican, Cuban, Venezuelan, etc.

Families headed by females account for most of those on welfare—black or white. Studies have shown that such families are significantly less able to survive

economically than those with both parents present, regardless of race.

**MYTH:**

Why work when you can live it up on welfare?

**FACT:**

The average payment to a welfare family of four with no other income varies among States, from a low of \$60 per month in Mississippi to a high of \$375 per month in Alaska.

In all but four States, welfare payments have been below the established poverty level of \$331 per month, or \$3,972 per year, for a family of four. Unfortunately, some of the Nation's working poor—ineligible for assistance under the present welfare system—earn less than the poverty level, too.

Each State establishes its own "need standard"—the amount required for the necessities of family living. A State standard may be below or above the poverty line. A State will use its "need standard" as a base for determining eligibility. However, 38 States pay less—some much less—than their own established standard of need. The Federal Government shares the cost of payments made by the States.

Welfare reform proposals—establishing a Federal income floor nationally for welfare families—would provide an even base for payments and increase recipients' incomes in at least eight States now paying the lowest amounts. The working poor would get a cash assist as well, insuring that a family head would always be better

off by working. Under welfare reform, any family head who is able to work but remains unemployed would have to take a job or job training in order to receive welfare benefits.

**MYTH:**

Give them more money and they'll spend it on drink and big cars.

**FACT:**

Most welfare families report that if they received any extra money it would go for essentials. A survey of welfare mothers showed that almost half would spend it primarily for food. Another 28 percent said they would spend any additional money on clothing and shoes. The survey found that 42 percent of mothers bought used clothing or relied on donated clothing to help make ends meet. Seventeen percent of the mothers said their children occasionally stayed home from school because they lacked decent clothes and shoes.

Nearly 10 percent of the mothers in the survey said they would spend extra money on rent for better housing, and 13 percent said they would spend it on a combination of food, clothes, and rent.

**MYTH:**

Most welfare children are illegitimate.

**FACT:**

A sizeable majority—approximately 68 percent—of the more than 7 million children in welfare families were born in wedlock, according to data compiled by the Social and Rehabilitation Service.

In addition, most middle- and upper-income families have always been able to purchase family planning counseling and services from private physicians. However, only in the past few years has government made a concerted effort to deliver such services to the poor.

**MYTH:**

Once on welfare, always on welfare.

**FACT:**

The average welfare family has been on the rolls for 23 months.

Studies by the Social and Rehabilitation Service, HEW, show that at any given time about two-thirds of welfare families will have been receiving assistance for less than three years. The number of long-term cases is relatively small—only 7.3 percent have been on welfare for 10 years or more. Such cases are likely to involve some form of disability.

Government-sponsored surveys show that the majority of welfare families are also embarrassed by, and discontented with, welfare. Most want to move off the welfare rolls, but it takes the average family about two years to overcome its problems.

Proposed welfare reforms are designed to strengthen work incentives, eliminate barriers to employment, and thus help present recipients rejoin the work force as soon as possible.

**MYTH:**

Welfare people are cheats.

FACT:

Suspected incidents of fraud or misrepresentation among welfare recipients occur in less than four-tenths of one percent of the total welfare caseload in the Nation, according to all available evidence. Cases where fraud is established occur even less frequently.

Another 1 to 2 percent of welfare cases are technically ineligible because of a misunderstanding of the rules, agency mistakes, or changes in family circumstances not reported fast enough. These are human and technical errors; it is not cheating.

While the proportion of those who deliberately falsify information is very low, both the Federal and State governments seek to eliminate them from the welfare rolls as well as to remove all errors in determining eligibility. The overwhelming majority of recipients, like most other Americans, are not wilfully misrepresenting their situations.

State agencies are required to check the eligibility of AFDC families at least once every six months; those with unemployed fathers, once every three months. The Federal Government also analyzes State records and makes on-site checks of a portion of each State's welfare cases.

Many publicized charges of cheating or ineligibility simply have not stood up under investigation.

MYTH:

Welfare's just a dole, a money handout.

FACT:

Money is necessary to a family lacking subsistence, but it usually takes more than just cash to help the typical welfare family get on its feet and back into the mainstream of our society.

The Social and Rehabilitation Service asked welfare agencies what social services they had given to welfare families besides money. Here's what the agencies reported and the percentage of families receiving each kind of service (most families received more than one service):

Health care advice and referrals  
(including Medicaid) . . 55.7 percent

Counseling on financial  
and home management 54.2 percent

Employment counseling . . 51.0 percent

Services to secure  
child support . . . . . 37.5 percent

Services to improve . .  
housing conditions . . . 36.2 percent

Services to enable children  
to continue school . . . 27.8 percent

Other services which many agencies provide include those related to child welfare, vocational rehabilitation, and youth development. This range of social services has been found essential in helping disadvantaged people move toward independence and constructive living.

Welfare reform, among other things, would separate the administration of cash payments from the delivery of social services. The goal is improved social and rehabilitation services, more accessible services, and more coordinated services to

those in need.

MYTH:

The welfare rolls are full of able-bodied loafers!

FACT:

Less than one percent of welfare recipients are able-bodied unemployed males: some 126,000 of the more than 13 million Americans on Federal/State-supported welfare (April 1971 statistics). Most of them—80 percent—want work, according to a Government-sponsored study; about half the men are enrolled in work training programs.

The largest group of working-age adults on welfare are 2.5 million mothers of welfare families, most of whom head families with no able-bodied male present. About 14 percent of these mothers work, and 7 percent are in work training. Many of the other mothers confront serious barriers to employment under the existing welfare system. But if day care were available for their children, and if job training and jobs were to be had, it is estimated that another 35 percent would be potential employees. An additional 4 to 5 percent of mothers have some employment potential, but require more extensive social rehabilitative service to prepare them. (The proposed welfare reform program includes provisions for day care, job training, public service jobs, and more extensive service for welfare recipients.)

The remaining 40 percent of welfare mothers have little or no employment potential because they care for small children at home, have major physical or mental incapacities, or other

insurmountable work barriers. In spite of this, 70 to 80 percent of welfare mothers consistently report they would work if present barriers to employment are overcome.

*Factors in the Employability  
of Welfare Mothers  
(From a 1969 study)*

Needed at home to care for small children, have a long-term disability, etc.	40%
Employable if job training, jobs, and day care were made available	35%
Already employed full- or part-time	14%
In work-training programs or waiting to be accepted	7%
Need extensive medical or rehabilitative services before becoming employable	4%

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THE VFB REACTS  
TO THE  
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT  
STUDY REPORT  
by  
Jimmy Nelson

[Prepared for a conference at the John Marshall Hotel in Richmond, Virginia held in 1971.]

“A very disturbing trend is becoming increasingly apparent throughout the country with respect to the organizational

and placement structure of programs for the blind, a trend which may be more ominous than anything we have seen in the past 20 years.

"It is nothing less than a total obliteration of separate State departments of government. Despite the fact that NFB efforts in recent years have brought about the establishment of independent agencies for the blind in both Idaho and South Carolina—separating the programs for the blind from state welfare departments—and that the organized blind in California and a few other states are moving vigorously to establish separate agencies, the tide is moving in the other direction and is gaining momentum.

"Every state and local affiliate should be alerted and should take vigorous action before it is too late. Regardless of how well-established the separate agency for the blind is in a particular state or locality, it may be absorbed into some large superagency, purporting to serve all the needs of the handicapped or disadvantaged, before the local blind are even aware that the change is contemplated, if vigilance is not maintained and strong efforts made to resist the takeover."

Thus wrote Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, President of the National Federation of the Blind and Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, a year or so ago. Could words be more prophetically significant! What blind person in the State of Virginia a few short years ago would have envisioned that the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped would be in jeopardy of extinction as a separate entity, rendering specific, individualized, and exclusive service to the

blind—and to them alone? In fact, how many of us only a few short months ago ever entertained such thoughts? Yet, here we are at this very moment faced squarely with the hideous prospect. The Government Management Study Report does indeed recommend just this—discontinuance of the VCVH as it now exists and thrusting it into a large, massive, catchall department.

The words of Dr. Jernigan come back to us at this point, do they not:

"Regardless of how well-established the separate agency for the blind is in a particular state or locality, it may be absorbed into some large superagency . . . before the local blind are even aware that the change is contemplated, if vigilance is not maintained and strong efforts made to resist the takeover."

It is in large measure for the purpose of gauging resistance to the takeover and laying plans to forestall it, that this meeting has been called.

How much strength can we muster? What spirit of compromise amongst ourselves, where dictated by wisdom, are we willing to exercise? What degree of persistence are we willing to display once a desirable course of action has been devised? Perhaps in Virginia the blind and their friends are in a favored position. It might just be that the knowledge of dire results in certain other states—such as Florida, Delaware, Maine, Vermont, and Wisconsin—may fortify our resolution to act with such strength as to avert a similar occurrence in this State. We might offer the prayer that this will be the case.



With so many fine statements having been forthcoming in defense of the separate State agency for the blind, a portion of which even authored by some of you and with many of which most of us are very familiar, no great amount of time will be taken at this point in further building a case. Yet a few words would seem to be needed; and we go to an article, which recently appeared in *The Braille Monitor*, by John F. Nagle, Chief of the Washington Office, vividly depicting what happens when services for the blind are thrown in with those for other handicapped groups.

‘Recently the Director of the Department of Public Welfare in the State of Maryland opposed a Federation-sponsored bill, raising the level of blind-aid payments. ‘If you approve this bill,’ the director told a committee of Legislature, ‘you must also raise the level of payments for all public assistance recipients in this state.’ The measure would have been adopted if only the 385 blind-aid recipients had been considered; but when all the recipients became involved—and there are many thousands of them—the proposal was too costly and was rejected.

“In Michigan the head of the Division of Services to the Blind admitted that he had tried to abolish the means test in vocational rehabilitation services; but his Division was a part of the general rehabilitation agency. To eliminate the means test for all handicapped clients would be too costly, and it could not be done with the existing organizational structure only for the blind and the others denied; and so it could not be done (and was not done) for the blind.”

This is the all-too-frequent result when services to the blind are joined to those for other segments of society, despite contentions to the contrary. Nor does it seem that data have been produced demonstrating the economic worth of the conglomerate arrangement. But even if a few pennies could be saved, would this be sufficient justification?

Suppose that last winter, with temperatures running well below freezing, an individual decided that to save \$100 he would not purchase a topcoat. He saved the \$100 then, but later caught pneumonia, spent \$5,000 in hospitalization and doctor's bills, and ultimately died. Now, with this in mind, even when money can be saved, is it always wise to do so, or does it not sometimes prove to be a foolish temporary expedient?

The constant goal should be to have something (and to retain something) that really works—that which provides exactly what is needed--and the Virginia Federation of the Blind holds the conviction (and has backed it with a strong resolution adopted at its 1971 Convention) that the specialized agency for the blind is best able to serve the blind.

Furthermore, under the separate-agency plan, it is easier for blind citizens to register approval or dissatisfaction with the agency and bring about the required changes; there is a more direct and effective approach to the Legislature to obtain funds and secure passage of beneficial bills; it is easier for the director to obtain competent personnel and dismiss unsuitable employees, and the director himself is more responsive to the problems and

needs of the blind and can be more readily retained or dismissed.

Having thus briefly discussed the importance of retaining the VCVH and the need for concerted, energetic, and persistent action to achieve this, we turn our attention to another proposal of the Government Management Study Report, that of bringing the School for the Blind under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped and having a single separate school for the blind located at Hampton, Virginia. . . .

The VFB favors the placement of the School for the Blind under the administrative jurisdiction of the state agency for the blind. Already the VCVH has administrative responsibility for the education of visually impaired students attending public schools, and the VFB contends that the principle of the separate agency being more capable of coping with the requirements of the blind, also has application with respect to the education of students attending the residential school for the blind.

The objectionable vocational emphasis by the Commission in the past upon sheltered workshop, industrial, and monotonous repetitive employment surely has given way to the enlightenment that the aspirations of the blind—spiritual, social, educational, recreational, and vocational—are quite as broad and noble as those of sighted persons. With this concept and understanding, the state agency would be compelled to provide an education for residential-school students comparable in quality to that afforded sighted students in the public-school system. Yet there would be the additional advantage that the education would be so designed as to

encompass the special requirements imposed by blindness; and it is concerning this essentiality that the value of the specialized agency is so evident. It, very simply stated, knows blind students better—better than the Department of Education, with all of its knowledge about the education of the sighted, and better than the residential school board, which, though comprised of highly-respected, civic-minded, and well-intentioned individuals, may not contain (as is the present situation) any blind members nor a wholesome and proper philosophy regarding blind people.

If it is reasonable and practical to entrust to the State agency the responsibility of rehabilitating, training, and placing the blind, is it not equally prudent and desirable to place under its administration the supervision of the education of the blind?

The VFB believes that such is in the best interest of the blind and will result in more effective fruition if the School for the Blind is separate from the School for the Deaf and located in the vicinity of a large metropolitan center, with its attendant advantages.

As one views and ponders conditions in this country, he must conclude that America is at the crossroads. Which way will it go? In some areas of American life there has been phenomenal progress, and there exists a potential for even greater progress. In contrast to this, however, there are deadly currents swirling in our land, which can, if not brought under control soon, result in a devastating and catastrophic breakdown and destruction of our democratic way of life.

Similarly, over these past 25 years the blind have achieved unparalleled success in breaking the shackles of restrictive and down-dragging tradition. Yet, here too, the forces of retrogression are swirling and threaten the future progress of the blind, with reattachment of the shackles.

Being fully aware of the dangerous trends and also of the favorable potentials facing continued progress of the blind and service to the blind, out of this conference today, after all viewpoints have been carefully and respectfully studied, may there emerge a solidarity which will counteract and defeat the forces of retrogression and assure that the progress, so apparent now, is only a passageway to a world of opportunity and fulfillment for the blind in the days that lie ahead.

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#### AWARD TO BLIND PHYSICIST

by  
Joseph Cassidy

[Copyrighted, *National Enquirer*, Lantana, Florida.]

A blind physics professor who has overcome his handicap and achieved success in the sighted world now spends much of his spare time helping other blind people keep their jobs.

Thomas Benham, who has been teaching physics at Haverford College near Philadelphia for 30 years, is the founder and guiding spirit of Science For the Blind (SFB)—an organization which develops tools and instruments for blind people.

And Benham is now the recipient of

the *Enquirer's* Good Samaritan Award because of his devotion to helping others.

Like Louis Lanius, for instance. Lanius is a Chicago linotype operator who lost his sight—and was about to lose his job, because he couldn't monitor and control the temperature of the linotype metal to keep it molten. Then Lanius heard about Science for the Blind.

Lanius asked SFB for help and after months of research, SFB designed a braille thermometer he could use in maintaining the temperature of the linotype metal. He was able to keep his job—and his dignity.

John Christiansen is a radio engineer for WCVN in Carrollton, Kentucky. He needed help to keep his job, which required him to watch voltage meters and other meters during broadcasts. And he found help in SFB's catalog which lists 12 work-aids for the blind that measure everything from voltage and current to liquids and distances, and that can be "read" by the fingers.

These are just two of the hundreds of blind people helped by SFB, which also tape-records technical magazines to keep blind scientists and technicians up-to-date. Benham works 30 to 40 hours a week outside his teaching job—without pay—to keep the financially troubled nonprofit organization going.

Science for the Blind, located in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, is just one of several reasons why the Governor of Pennsylvania presented a citation in 1969 "to Thomas A. Benham, handicapped person of the year, in recognition of his exceptional contributions in behalf of the handicapped."

And why Dr. Mae Davidow, president of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind, says.

"Through his untiring efforts at Science for the Blind, Professor Benham is one of the world's greatest contributors in making life easier for the blind. He is a wonderful human being and truly a Good Samaritan."

Benham, 56, is also chairman of Best Sellers for the Blind, a Maryland group which puts best-selling books on tape, and a former chairman of the Philadelphia Association for the Blind.

His work with the blind "just happened," he told the *Enquirer*. "I know about working for the blind and I know what blind people need. I have been blind since I was two, and being blind didn't seem to be such a crisis. I don't really remember making any adjustment to it. I just grew up with it."

And as for his interest in science and physics, that just came about naturally, too.

"My father says that when I was eight years old I came into the living room shaking a cigar box and told him there was a motor inside. I opened the box and there was a jumble of wire inside and he said it didn't look like any motor he had ever seen.

"I answered that I had taken it apart and was going to put it back together again—and I did. I built my first radio when I was 12. So my talent in science and engineering just came naturally "

Currently Benham has a patent on a

laser cane he is developing for the blind. This cane will send out a laser beam which will cause the cane to vibrate when the beam hits anything in front of the blind person, from ground level to head level. In this way, the blind person is warned of an obstruction he might trip over or walk into, including low-hanging objects.

He is still working on the invention, but his biggest concern right now is Science for the Blind.

"If we don't get money, we may have to close up," he said. "Last year was very bad financially."

Right now Benham's wife runs the organization on a day-to-day basis. Eleven people are on the payroll and about ten others volunteer from time to time. He says his group needs about \$100,000 a year to reach financial stability.

"I go around speaking to clubs and anybody else who will listen, trying to find a way to get the money," he says, "but it hasn't been successful."

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#### HARTWICK SERVES BLIND

[Reprinted by courtesy of *American Libraries*, publication of the American Library Association.]

Do any blind or visually handicapped students attend your college or university? If so, are you making efforts to help them obtain the quality and variety of materials needed for completion of their studies? We would like to tell you about some of the types of services Hartwick College Library is providing for the four legally

blind students enrolled for the 1970-1971 school year. We know that many blind persons, and especially those attending institutions of higher learning, are very independent, and are often turned off by the way services are offered to them by other students or faculty members. Above all, each person seeks to maintain his identity and does not want to be coddled or pitied. What he does want and deserves, is the same kind of library help offered to other students so that he too, can come to the library to study like other students.

At Hartwick, we have tried to provide the same services to the blind students that we provide to the sighted--reference, interlibrary loan, recreational, etc. Naturally, there must be certain modifications, such as obtaining the books for each course on tape or in Braille format. To find these materials, the student asks the professor before the beginning of the term for a list of texts needed for the course, brings the list to us in the library, and we in turn search out the necessary items, utilizing the services of the Regional Library for the Blind and the Special Education Instructional Materials Center (SEIMC), both in Albany. These organizations consult a master listing of titles called the *Central Catalog*, produced at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky, and composed from an extensive file of volunteer and commercially produced Braille, large-print, and recorded books. The catalog is arranged alphabetically by titles within subject areas such as Spanish, music, philosophy, and zoology, and contains reference to the author, publisher, media, grade level, and depository source for the item. After we locate the appropriate information, the college requests the material directly from

the source and arranges to pay for the materials if there is any charge involved.

We have two students enrolled in the same biology course and found out from the SEIMC that the Braille copy of the title totals twenty-nine volumes or roughly six linear feet of shelf space. The library decided to obtain its own copy of the text and wrote to the source indicated in the *Central Catalog*. The only charge was the reimbursement of the brailion paper used to copy the text and since our students are eligible on the basis of their age, the SEIMC supplied the brailion free of charge to the text producer. The twenty-nine volumes are housed in the library, in a special section of stacks set aside for Braille books, and the students themselves decided to only use it in the library and to check out one volume at a time for overnight use when necessary (similar to regular reserve materials).

The decision to set aside stack space for the Braille books in the library was based on three factors: (1) that the students quite obviously did not have enough shelf space in their rooms to house the volumes; (2) that materials such as dictionaries belonged where all students could use them equally; and (3) that blind students wanted to use the library as freely as their classmates.

At Hartwick, each blind student has the option of either ordering a text himself or having the library supply it. Roughly, the library orders 40 percent of the materials, the students 60 percent. All blind students are registered borrowers of Recordings for the Blind, Inc. in New York City, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and receive Braille books, tapes, and talking books free on

loan. All materials of this type may be mailed free of charge if labelled "Materials for the blind and physically handicapped," which is a considerable savings because of the weight of the volumes. Occasionally a student receives the wrong tape, a reel of tape is missing, a text is incomplete, or some similar problem arises. They then ask the library to call the lending institution and try to straighten out the difficulty. We have found that the lending libraries are most cooperative and will try to give the student's concern their immediate attention.

Another service we provide is simply making a study room available so that blind students may take notes with their Braille writers or on tape without disturbing other students. If a text is not available anywhere, the student may hire a reader to read it to him and this stimulates conversation between the reader and the student. We find our blind students much more relaxed about coming to the library when they know they are not disturbing others who are studying and therefore find the study room a good solution.

There are other easy ways to devise library services by using a little common sense. For example, Hartwick Library had an electronic security system installed during the summer and, in order to help control traffic, we have a sort of maze. The blind students had learned their way around the library last year before the system was installed, and they were confused by the new arrangement. To assist them in relearning their way around the library we drew them a map using one of the students' raised line drawing kits. If a kit is not available, it's easy to improvise using a ball-point pen, a sheet of plastic, and drawing a mirror image. The pen

makes a depression in the plastic, and when it is turned over, a raised line map has been produced.

We could go on describing searches and other regular library services used by our blind students. However, we'd just like to have you use your imagination and see what you can do to help the blind students on your campus.—*Carolyn Wolf, reference librarian, Hartwick College, Oneonta; and Joan Miller, associate in instructional materials for handicapped children, SEIMC, Albany, New York.*

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## LOSS OF SIGHT DOES NOT MEAN LOSS OF TALENT

by  
Connie Gross

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Livermore (California) *Herald-News*.]

If you were the head of personnel for a huge insurance company with an office staff numbering 60 persons—would you hire a transcriber who was blind?

Union Mutual Life Insurance Company of Maine agreed to do just that, and for three years attractive Mrs. Harry Preston of Livermore was a valued employee, working on the complicated work in the intermediary section dealing with Medicare, part B.

Her only regret at leaving the job to come to California was the knowledge that there was no sightless person trained and ready to take her place, to continue to bring people face to face with the fact that the blind have merely lost their sight—not their talent for work.

Blinded as a young girl from the effects of medication during a serious attack of malaria, Alice regained her sight for a time, then lost it completely many years ago.

Born in the Canal Zone, where her parents, and her late husband's parents were living, Alice met Harry Preston at school, and they were married after college. Harry was the owner of a construction company, and together they spent many years in Colombia and other areas of South America. Their oldest son, now married and living in Connecticut, and their daughter Beverly, Mrs. Frederic Olesek of Pleasanton, were born in Panama City and are bi-lingual, as is their mother. A younger son is a student at the University of Maine.

After the loss of her husband, Alice and the children lived in Puerto Rico, where her son was stationed while in the service.

Later she joined her daughter and family in New York City, where Alice attended a rehabilitation center, "almost a beginning of a new life." It was there that she learned the use of the white cane, giving her complete independence to travel alone. She also learned to travel on buses, subways and trains, and commuted daily, alone, on the Long Island Railroad across the city to the center. There she also studied Braille machines, dictaphones and the office techniques so important for her later career.

Alice then moved to Maine. "Maine was lovely in spring and summer," she explained, "but I found it difficult to walk and travel with my cane during the fall and winter. Hearing is so important to the

sightless, and the snow and slush of winter, the cover of leaves in the fall, all deadened sounds, which I needed for guidance."

When Fredric Olesek, a Pan American pilot-engineer, transferred to California, he and Beverly were impressed with the attractiveness and convenience of mobile home living. With her mother's special requirements in mind, Beverly felt that Mrs. Preston would adapt and enjoy this type of independent living, plus the additional bonus of good year-round weather for her daily walks.

Mrs. Preston resides in Sun Valley Estates in Livermore, and has many kind things to say about her friends and neighbors there. The Estates manager, Mrs. Alice Sims, says, "Alice is an inspiration to all of us, and we love her." Neighbors say that her courage and personality "make our own little problems disappear."

During the interview, Alice asked that one thing be stressed. "The blind should be treated as people," she insists, "the biggest mistake in the sighted world is treating us as an oddity."

A member of the California Council of the Blind, affiliated with the National Federation of the Blind, in which all top executives are sightless, Mrs. Preston has recently returned from a State convention and workshop in Stockton and is impressed with the plans and programs being formed. She attends monthly meetings of the Alameda County Chapter in Oakland and is vitally interested in the outcome of a proposed bill which would put all services for the blind under one heading. She feels that this will save government money and improve services

for the blind. . . .

Fond of books, Alice enjoys the "talking book" service which keeps her current with magazines and novels. She participates in the social events at Sun Valley Estates, including their monthly luncheons and bingo games, at which she uses a Braille bingo card.

A blessing to the sightless, Braille equipment has enabled Alice to enjoy her kitchen, too. Spices are coded, canned goods and meats in her freezer are also coded, and a Braille clock assists her with timing, as does a machine for her letters and "notes by the telephone, to remind myself."

"Mother is a wonderful babysitter," says her daughter, as Fredric, aged, 3, and Gordon, 1, run to the arms of their grandmother during this interview. "They are a handful at times," Alice laughs, "but thank God, children have the gift of loving you as you are."

Her constant companion for many years, "a real world traveler," is Wrinkles, an aptly named boxer. "She is not a seeing-eye dog, though many people think she is when they see us together," Alice says, "she has learned my ways and is a loving friend."

The days are busy for this lady with a happy nature, but they lack one thing. "I would love to go back to work," she says.

Anyone who needs capable help with dictaphone and typing work would have to look far to find a more willing, or winning, worker.

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## BLIND WOMAN'S CAUSE

by  
Maryln Schwartz

[Reprinted by permission from the Dallas (Texas) *Morning News*.]

Blind Mrs. Mable Richardson says her 10-year fight for survival is about down to the final struggle.

The battle began in 1961 with the State Commission for the Blind.

"When my husband, who was also blind, died ten years ago, I expected to continue running the vending stand at the Terminal Annex post office. I had been helping run it for 23 years. But the day after the funeral, the state commission, which owns it, ordered me to vacate. They said I wasn't qualified to run it and said it had been given to someone else."

Mrs. Richardson claims, however, that qualifications had nothing to do with it.

"I had been writing letters at that time to several congressmen wanting to know why the braille equipment at the State Commission for the Blind was being used for political advertising and why the money from vending machines in federal buildings was not being given to the blind people who were running them. It is a law that it should be."

Lon E. Alsop, the commission's executive secretary-treasurer at that time, told *The News* in 1961 that he would not let Mrs. Richardson operate the stand. "I'd be doing an injustice to let her run it. She's written to Washington--scared them all to death. I'd be in trouble all the time.



She's not capable of running the stand. She doesn't have what it takes to run it, spending all that time writing letters."

Mrs. Richardson took her case all the way to the Texas Supreme Court, but lost. "So I had to go about supporting myself and my three children the best I could. It was rough," she said. "We had no income except some social security. That's when I decided to start buying and selling dogs for profit."

In 1968, Mrs. Richardson explained, she bought a litter of four poodles from a couple in Forth Worth.

"I told them that I already had some buyers lined up, but that I could not pay them until I had gotten the money from the buyers. They said they would take an undated check and hold it until I got the money."

Instead, she said, they cashed the check immediately, and there was no money to cover it.

"And a few days later, the puppies died. My veterinarian told the couple in that case, I didn't feel I should have to pay for them. Since I am blind, I am not able to check the dogs I buy as closely as most people can. I have to trust people."

The couple continued to press Mrs. Richardson for the \$150, and recently filed charges against her.

Ordered into court with her court-appointed attorney, Jack Hampton, Mrs. Richardson, however, found her case dismissed on a motion by the prosecution.

"This is another case of real lack of

laws to protect not just blind people, but everyone. There is no law that requires people selling dogs to have a certificate of health from a qualified veterinarian. As a result, people are constantly buying dogs that are so sick they died within a few days."

Even with the court case settled, Mrs. Richardson is worried about her future. So are several friends who live near her home at 218 W. Woodin.

"She's just about destitute," explained one. "She's been taken advantage of again and again. She can't keep up her house with her condition and the house is about to fall apart. It's an unbelievable situation that most people couldn't survive in for five minutes. I don't know how she goes on."

Mrs. Richardson says she'll continue to fight.

"I don't really have any other alternative, I was trying to organize a Society for Independent Blind Persons. It would be to promote spiritual and economic aid to the blind. The way things are going, it looks like I'm going to need it."

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S MAIL BASKET

January 4, 1972

Dear Dr. Jernigan,

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform you of the formation of a new chapter of the Washington State Association of the Blind. Although we are

only nine members in number, we feel we have a good start. Our membership is delighted to be a part of NFB and we want to take an active part in helping to build a better place in this sighted world for us all.

I would like to congratulate you on the wonderful work that you are doing in the Federation. I greatly enjoyed your address to the national Convention in Houston last year. I heard the transcription and I thought it was outstanding.

We have received copies of the talking book called "The Man and The Movement" about Dr. Jacobus tenBroek. I doubt there is anything I can say about this man that has not already been said before and much better than I could ever state it. Needless to say he was most inspiring.

Our chapter was formed on the 17th day of December 1971, taking in the area of Grant and Adams Counties in Central Washington. Its creation came about as a result of efforts of Gary Ernest of Othello, now vice president, and myself. We launched a campaign in October to find as many other blind persons in the area as we could. Our efforts proved fruitful and here we are. The deeper we delve into it the more people we find and the more work we find there is to do and the greater the need for our existence.

As for myself, I am 43 years of age, married and have five children. I am the former editor and publisher of the weekly newspaper here in Warden, former city councilman, and a past president of the Chamber of Commerce. I am still a businessman having just sold a small business that I operated for the past four

years and am in the midst of forming a new business.

I hope you will place me on your mailing list for any and all releases from your office.

One more thought in parting. As you know we in Washington State are working to gain legislation to create the State Commission for the Blind. A thought came to me that has been dwelling in my mind since I gave testimony before a State Senate Committee hearing last month. Why not a Federal Commission for the Blind and do away with such things as NAC. I would like to hear more thoughts on this subject.

May I say that we are proud and happy to join you and the other Federationists at the Barricades.

Sincerely,

Ralph V. Solberg, President  
Grant-Adams Chapter  
Washington State Association of the Blind

- - - - -

January 12, 1972

Dear Mr. Solberg:

I am delighted to have your letter and to learn of the formation of the Grant-Adams Chapter of the Washington State Association of the Blind. Indeed, I will put you on the list to receive all presidential releases. I shall also send you some other recorded material about the movement. Perhaps you already have it, but if you do, then you can pass it on to others.

You sound like a very busy and active man, just the sort we need in leadership positions in the movement. I hope that I will have the opportunity of meeting you personally sometime soon. Perhaps it can be at this year's NFB Convention in Chicago—if, that is, you are planning to attend, which I certainly hope will be the case.

Thank you again for writing to me and for telling me of the formation of the new chapter.

Cordially,

Kenneth Jernigan, President  
National Federation of the Blind

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## AGING AND BLINDNESS

The White House Conference on Aging, held in Washington, D.C. last December, had many sessions on "Special Concerns," one of which was on Aging and Blindness. National, State, and local organizations of and for the blind actively participated. It was pointed out that approximately half of the estimated 500,000 legally blind persons in the United States are 65 years of age or older while two thirds are past middle age. Moreover, the majority of all new cases of blindness each year fall within the same age brackets. Despite these facts, most of the efforts of both governmental and private agencies have been directed toward blind children and to blind adults of employable age.

The hope was expressed that blind persons in the older age brackets would become beneficiaries of the rapidly

expanding programs and services for older Americans in such fields as health, nutrition, housing, recreation, employment, and continuing education. The specific recommendations of the session on Aging and Blindness, which were adopted by the White House Conference, are:

1. That Congress increase OASDI and the adult public assistance categories to the immediate level of living recommended by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (at least \$2,297 for a single person and \$4,185 for a married couple) and that the adult categories of public assistance be federalized and that Social Security benefits not be deducted from public assistance payments.

2. That the National Eye Institute and other interested organizations on a national and local level combine their efforts in an urgent overall program to prevent or alleviate diabetic retinopathy; establish a center for the study of diseases of the macula; and increase research efforts in the fields of cataract, glaucoma, and vascular diseases of the eye; establish screening efforts especially at hospitals, medical centers, homes for the aged, nursing homes, and extended care facilities to find aged patients who have blinding eye diseases which can be helped by medical or surgical means and low vision aids. Such efforts should be made by interested philanthropic organizations and implemented if necessary by legislative action. It is further recommended that the National Eye Institute be required to develop better statistics on incidence, prevalence and etiology of blinding eye conditions; that Congress amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to cover low vision aids when the need is

certified by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist specializing in low vision treatment; and that the number of low vision centers be increased and that the centers be staffed under the supervision of an ophthalmologist or a qualified optometrist.

3. That the Vocational Rehabilitation Act be broadened to make rehabilitation services available to blind persons without regard to age or economic need and that Congress be urged to enact S. 1030, a bill to amend the Vocational Rehabilitation Act to provide rehabilitation services for older blind persons, and S. 2506, a bill to amend the Randolph-Sheppard Act, to accomplish these purposes.

4. That the elderly, including the blind and handicapped, must have access to all modes of mobility and transportation for obtaining the essentials of daily living and the cultural and social benefits of modern society.

5. That the Administration and Congress develop a network of personal care benefits for individuals with a certain level of functional disability to enable the older person to purchase whatever services are necessary to help him remain in his own home if he so wishes; such benefit is to be in addition to basic minimum income and assure a financial basis for local community service providers.

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH  
by  
Mary McGinnis

[Editor's Note: Mary McGinnis is from Pennsylvania.]

MOCK BARBECUE

one chicken--  
cut up into parts for eating. Place in a shallow pan which has been greased. Cover with brown sugar and dot with lots of butter or margarine. Bake uncovered for one hour in a 350-degree oven

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MONITOR MINIATURES

Attention: All Proofreaders

Are any of you math lovers and wholly conversant with the Nemeth code?

If you are, the Iowa Commission for the Blind would like you to make contact so that you can work with us in preparing textbooks. We will pay well! Contact:

Mrs. Florence Grannis  
Iowa Commission for the Blind  
4th and Keosauqua Way  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Telephone (515) 283-2601

\*\*\*\*\*

Nellie Hargrove, president of NFB of Tennessee and a member of the NFB Executive Committee, has resigned a position with Tennessee's Department of Public Works after thirteen years of employment to become a full-time student at the University of Tennessee. Nellie has been a part-time student at the university for the past year. She is majoring in education, and she is an honor student.

\*\*\*\*\*

Congressman John Brademas (D-Ind.) has introduced legislation honoring the late Mary E. Switzer, former administrator of the Federal Government's Social and Rehabilitation Service. Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn.) has already introduced the bill in the Senate. The bill designates the South Building of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington as the Mary E. Switzer Building, honoring Miss Switzer's dedicated service to human beings.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telstar*, the publication of the NFB of North Dakota, reports the organization of a chapter, the Fargo-Moorhead Federation of the Blind, the first local chapter of the State affiliate in North Dakota. The president of the chapter is Ray Restad, a counselor at Concordia College; vice-president, Ken Miller, a sophomore at Moorhead State College; and secretary-treasurer, Linda Lottes, a freshman at North Dakota State University. The new chapter is already deeply involved in activities to improve the lot of the blind of North Dakota.

\* \* \* \* \*

In late December the Nixon Administration announced it will ask Congress to give half a billion dollars to States and counties to let them freeze or roll back their welfare costs, without cutting benefits. This will greatly enhance prospects of passage of some version of the President's welfare reform proposal (H.R. 1) by putting strong pressure on the Congress for fast action. Under the proposal the Federal Government would pay all cost increases in the welfare programs for the current fiscal year

beginning last July 1st, except costs which exceed the level of the last fiscal year by more than 20 percent. The President will also propose that, starting July 1, 1972, the Federal Government will absorb a greater share of welfare costs than is provided by existing law. The proposal would provide savings in the current fiscal year to 49 states. Thus the Nixon Administration is essentially joining forces with Wilbur Mills, Chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, who last November introduced a bill to provide that the Federal Government would assume all increases in the State matching costs for assistance payments which are in excess of the State costs for the year ending June 30, 1971. With this huge "carrot" dangling before them, State and local governments will undoubtedly press hard for enactment of the welfare reform measure.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mary Nichols of the NFB of the District of Columbia writes that in a recent issue of *The Ladies Home Journal* there appeared an article entitled "Once Upon a Time," written by the former President's daughter, Lynda Johnson Robb, which reviews a children's book. The story tells of a clown who brings a strange beast (it has a trunk) to the community. The people were wild. The King sends his six wise blind men to identify the creature, but each is guided by his narrow perception. The satiric characterizations of the King and Queen vividly portray how blind we all are when it comes to seeing the whole picture.

\* \* \* \* \*

A group of blind persons, led by

Myrna Schmidt of New York, recently staged a protest demonstration against the National Accreditation Council, because of the refusal of NAC to admit the group of blind persons to one of their meetings. Miss Schmidt, president of the Metropolitan Federation of the Blind, charged that the Council had only five blind members among the 35 trustees. "The implication behind NAC's refusal to allow participation by the blind," Miss Schmidt said, "is that blind people are either incapable of, or not desired in, the conducting of their own lives. This to us, as blind people, is a totally unacceptable situation." Miss Schmidt's organization is a chapter of our New York State affiliate. The community affairs director for the Council, Miss Anne New, said that the meeting was a working session and that representatives of the Federation were invited to discuss their grievances in private at some other time. Said Miss New, "you don't necessarily put a majority of TB patients on the board of a tuberculosis hospital."

\* \* \* \* \*

Congressman Charles A. Vanik (D-Ohio) recently introduced legislation to insure the right of handicapped citizens to participate in Federal programs. Citing the need for increased regard for the rights of the physically and mentally handicapped, Vanik said, "I believe that the treatment and regard for the rights of handicapped citizens in our country is one of America's shameful oversights." Vanik noted that more than forty million Americans of all walks of life have been disabled in our wars, in our highway accidents, through disease, and by the ravages of poverty. Vanik's proposed legislation would amend title VI of the Nation's Civil Rights

legislation so as to insure equal opportunities for the handicapped by making needless discrimination illegal in programs assisted with federal financial aid.

\* \* \* \* \*

In what may prove to be a landmark decision fraught with beneficial implications, the U.S. Supreme Court recently declared unanimously that States using Federal funds for Social Security programs must abide by the eligibility standards set up under Federal law. Specifically, the court held that Illinois was not entitled to restrict help under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program to eligible youths who attend high school and vocational school but deny it to those attending college. The Social Security Act allows use of Federal funds for youths who are full-time college students. Illinois authorities argued that the Federal law permitted States to vary their eligibility requirements from Federal standards. The High Court held that there was no basis for believing that Congress gave the States the option of "tailoring" their eligibility standards within a specific group and excluding those entitled to payments under Federal standards. The decision was also a sharp rebuke to the Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare which has interpreted the law as not mandatorily listing those who must be included under State programs but merely as a broad definition of those for whom the government was willing to make matching payments.

\* \* \* \* \*

"When I decided many years ago to profess English, I committed myself to

that profession. . . . In essence, I then developed a life style." So spoke Dr. Andrea Goudie, blind assistant professor of English at Wichita (Kansas) State University. She was speaking to a reporter for the *Pollock Newspaper News* of Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she was raised and had her early schooling. She received her Ph.D. in English from Indiana University and says that she chose her particular field because "basically, I'm simply a humanist. . . . I like working with people. I like to experience the best that has been said and thought, both now and in the past. To me, English was the best way of doing it."

\* \* \* \* \*

Harry Cordellos, blind lecturer in physical education and art at Hayward State College (California), ran in the five mile race sponsored by the Reno, Nevada *State Journal* and finished twelfth in a large field of runners.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Claude Eugene Singley, blind citizen of Clinton, South Carolina, recently became a member of the All American Rose Society. He is becoming well-known for the many varieties of prize roses which he raises.

\* \* \* \* \*

Michael Sopko of Somerville, New Jersey, is a "firm believer in exercise. . . ." He runs the Driftwood Health Salon in Somerville and the *Somerset Messenger Gazette* spread the word of his success in a long news article. Sopko was blinded in an auto accident. Before the accident he was interested in becoming an auto mechanic

and he went to the New Jersey Commission for the Blind hoping they could find an auto school he could attend. "They couldn't find anything for him, and as they looked, the months dragged by, with Sopko unable to do anything.

" 'But I'm not that kind of a guy,' he said. 'I didn't want to crawl in a hole. After four years of waiting for the Commission to do something, I heard about someone who had gone to massage school. It sounded good.' " "The Swedish Institute in New York agreed to take Sopko as a student although it had never had a blind student before." He graduated after a year and a half with a B average. "He has not given up his interest in cars, and still likes to tinker with them." "I'm also teaching myself to travel alone. I'm learning from a blind guy down the road who's a radio repairman," Sopko said." "Now learning Braille on his own, he is a great user of the talking books from the Library for the Blind in Trenton."

\* \* \* \* \*

Another organization of the blind has become an integral part of an ever growing NFB family. On October 23rd a group of blind citizens in the Gainesville, Florida area voted to join our Florida affiliate and will be known as the Gainesville Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida.

NFB First Vice President Don Capps and his wife Betty were on hand to represent the national organization and to assist in the organizational activities. Also present were Sam Sitt and his wife Gertrude, who participated in the successful meeting. The following officers were elected: president, Jon E. McMillan,

Gainesville, Florida; vice-president, Jim Evrard, Gainesville, Florida; secretary, Miss Cindy Harrison, Gainesville, Florida; treasurer, Mrs. Donna Evrard, Gainesville, Florida.

President McMillan is a teacher of

blind children in the Sunland Training Center at Gainesville. The new NFB chapter has good leadership and is a welcome addition to our new Florida affiliate. Most members purchased NFB pins and are wearing them proudly. Welcome aboard Gainesville chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*



CONSTITUTION  
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, INC.  
Revised and Adopted 1970  
Amended 1971

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this organization is The National Federation of the Blind.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of The National Federation of the Blind is to promote the security and social welfare of the blind.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section a. Membership of The National Federation of the Blind shall consist of the members of the state affiliates plus members at large in states, territories, and possessions of the United States not having affiliates, who shall have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

Under procedures to be established by the Executive Committee, any person denied admission by a state affiliate may be admitted as a member at large. The dues of members at large shall be one dollar per year.

Section b. Each state or territorial possession of the United States, including the District of Columbia, having an affiliate shall have one vote at the National Convention and shall be referred to hereinafter as state affiliates.

Section c. Affiliates shall be organizations of the blind, controlled by the blind.

Section d. The Executive Committee shall establish procedures for the admission of new state affiliates. There shall be only one affiliate in each state, except as hereinafter provided in this Article:

- (1) More than one affiliate may continue to exist in states which have more than one affiliate at the time of the adoption of this Constitution.
- (2) With the consent of the organizations involved, more than one affiliate may be admitted in a state or territorial possession under procedures to be established by the Executive Committee.
- (3) If all of the organizations involved do not consent to the admission of

more than one affiliate in a state, such action may not be taken except by an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the states present and voting at a National Convention.

- (4) In any state having two or more affiliates the state shall be entitled to one vote cast as a unit. The dues and voting strength shall be apportioned among the affiliates according to mutual agreement. In the absence of such agreement the dues and voting strength shall be apportioned equally.

Section e. The Convention by a two-thirds vote may expel and by a simple majority vote suspend, or otherwise discipline, any member or affiliate for conduct inconsistent with this Constitution, or policies established by the Convention; provided that notice of the proposed action shall be announced to the Convention on the preceding day.

#### ARTICLE IV OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section a. The officers of The National Federation of the Blind shall consist of (1) president, (2) first vice-president, (3) second vice-president, (4) secretary, and (5) treasurer. They shall be elected biennially.

Section b. The officers shall be elected by majority vote of the state affiliates present and voting at a National Convention.

Section c. The National Federation of the Blind shall have an Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the officers plus eight members selected in the same way, whose regular term shall be two years, all eight members to be elected under this system beginning in July, 1960, four for two years and four for one year.

Section d. There shall be, in addition, a Board of Directors, the duties of the said Board shall be advisory only. The membership of the Board of Directors shall be the officers of the Federation, the elected members of the Executive Committee, and other persons, not to exceed twelve in number, who may be appointed, from time to time, by the Executive Committee, subject to confirmation by the Federation at the next ensuing annual Convention. When so confirmed, such members of the Board of Directors shall serve for one year, or until their successors shall have been appointed by the Executive Committee.

Section e. Officers, Executive Committee members, and members of the Board of Directors may be removed or recalled by a majority vote of the Convention; provided that notice of the proposed action shall be announced to the Convention on the preceding day.

Section f. No person receiving regular substantial financial compensation from The National Federation of the Blind shall be an elected officer or Executive Committee member.

## ARTICLE V POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CONVENTION THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND THE PRESIDENT

### Section a. Powers and Duties of the Convention.

The Convention is the supreme authority of the Federation. It is the legislature of the Federation. As such, it has final authority with respect to all issues of policy. Its decisions shall be made after opportunity has been afforded for full and fair discussion. Delegates, members, and all blind persons in attendance may participate in all Convention discussions as a matter of right. Any member of the Federation may make or second motions, propose nominations, and serve on committees; and is eligible for election to office, except that only blind members may hold elective office. Voting and making motions by proxy are prohibited. The Convention shall (when possible) determine the time and place of its meetings. Consistent with the democratic character of the Federation, Convention meetings shall be so conducted as to prevent parliamentary maneuvers which would have the effect of interfering with the expression of the will of the majority on any question, or with the rights of the minority to full and fair presentation of their views. The Convention is not merely a gathering of representatives of separate state organizations. It is a meeting of the Federation at the national level in its character as a national organization. Committees of the Federation are committees of the national organization. The nominating committee shall consist of one member from each state affiliate represented at the Convention.

### Section b. Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee.

The function of the Executive Committee as the governing body of the Federation between Conventions is to make policies when necessary and not in conflict with the policies adopted by the Convention. Policy decisions which can reasonably be postponed until the next meeting of the National Convention shall not be made by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall serve as a credentials committee. In this capacity it shall deal with organizational problems presented to it by any affiliate, shall decide appeals regarding the validity of elections in state or local affiliates, and shall certify the credentials of delegates when questions concerning the validity of such credentials arise. At each meeting, the Executive Committee shall receive a report from the President on the operations of the Federation. There shall be a standing subcommittee of the Executive Committee which shall consist of three members. The committee shall be known as the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance. It shall, whenever it deems necessary, recommend to the Executive Committee principles of budgeting, accounting procedures, and methods of financing the Federation program; and shall consult with the President on major expenditures.

The Executive Committee shall meet at the time of each National Convention. It shall hold other meetings on the call of the President or on the written request of any five members.

## Section c Powers and Duties of the President

The President is the principal administrative officer of the Federation. In this capacity his duties consist of: carrying out the policies adopted by the Convention; conducting the day-to-day management of the affairs of the Federation; authorizing expenditures from the Federation treasury in accordance with and in implementation of the policies established by the Convention; appointing all committees of the Federation except the Executive Committee; coordinating all activities of the Federation including the work of other officers and of committees; hiring, supervising and, when necessary, dismissing staff members and other employees of the Federation and determining their numbers and compensation; taking all administrative actions necessary and proper to put into effect the programs and accomplish the purposes of the Federation.

The implementation and administration of the interim policies adopted by the Executive Committee is the responsibility of the President as principal administrative officer of the Federation.

## ARTICLE VI STATE AFFILIATES

Any organized group desiring to become a state affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind shall apply for affiliation by submitting to the President of the National Federation of the Blind a copy of its Constitution and a list of the names and addresses of its elected officers. Under procedures to be established by the Executive Committee action shall be taken on the application. If the action is affirmative, the National Federation of the Blind shall issue to the organization a charter of affiliation. Upon request of the national President the State affiliate shall, from time to time, provide to the national President the names and addresses of its members. Copies of all amendments to the Constitution and/or by-laws of an affiliate shall be sent without delay to the national President. No organization shall be accepted as an affiliate and no organization shall remain an affiliate unless at least a majority of its voting members are blind. The president, the vice-president (or vice-presidents) and at least a majority of the executive committee or board of directors of the State affiliate and of all of its local chapters must be blind. Affiliates must not merely be social organizations but must formulate programs and actively work to promote the economic and social betterment of the blind. Affiliates must comply with the provisions of the Constitution of the Federation. Policy decisions of the Federation are binding upon all affiliates, and the affiliate must participate affirmatively in carrying out such policy decisions. The name *National Federation of the Blind*, *Federation of the Blind*, or any variant thereof is the property of the National Federation of the Blind; and any affiliate, or local chapter of an affiliate, which ceases to be part of the National Federation of the Blind (for whatever reason) shall forthwith forfeit the right to use the name *National Federation of the Blind*, *Federation of the Blind*, or any variant thereof.<sup>1</sup>

A general convention of the membership of an affiliate or of the elected delegates of

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1. The last sentence of this paragraph was added by amendment in 1971

the membership must be held and its principal executive officers must be elected at least once every two years. There can be no closed membership. Proxy voting is prohibited in state and local affiliates. Each affiliate must have a written constitution or by-laws setting forth its structure, the authority of its officers, and the basic procedures which it will follow. No publicly contributed funds may be divided among the membership of an affiliate on the basis of membership, and (upon request from the national office) an affiliate must present an accounting of all of its receipts and expenditures. An affiliate which fails to be represented at three consecutive National Conventions may be considered to be inactive, and may be suspended as an affiliate by the Executive Committee. The affiliate must not indulge in attacks upon the officers, committeemen, leaders, or members of the Federation or upon the organization itself outside of the organization, and must not allow its officers or members to indulge in such attacks. This requirement shall not be interpreted to interfere with the right of an affiliate or its officers or members to carry on a political campaign inside the Federation for election to office or to achieve policy changes. No affiliate may join or support, or allow its officers or members to join or support, any temporary or permanent organization inside the Federation which has not received the sanction and approval of the Federation.

#### ARTICLE VII DUES

Each state affiliate shall pay an annual assessment of \$30.00. Assessments shall be payable in advance on or before January 1.

Any state affiliate which is in arrears with its dues at the time of the National Convention shall be denied the right to vote.

#### ARTICLE VIII DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, all assets of the organization shall be given to an organization with similar purposes which has received a 501.C3 certification by the Internal Revenue Service.

#### ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any regular annual Convention of the Federation by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the states registered, present, and voting. Provided further: that the proposed amendment must be signed by five member states in good standing and that it must have been presented to the President the day before final action by the Convention.



88-50699  
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